

## Athenian Democracy at Work

### Objectives:

- To identify the "Assembly" and the "Council of 500" as the legislative and executive institutions of Athenian democracy.
- To describe the selection, composition and functions of the Athenian Assembly and the Council of 500.
- To distinguish between the institutions of direct democracy in ancient Athens and the institutions of representative democracy in modern western societies.
- To understand the necessary preconditions for direct, participatory democracy.
- To understand the role of sortition (random selection by lot of council members and officers), and the role of rotation in office, in preventing seizure of power by any one group.
- To think critically about the role ostracism played in Athens.

### Activity Questions:

- What were the preconditions of a direct, participatory democracy?
- Who got to participate on the direct democracy? Who did not? Who were the citizens?
- How did a large slave population in ancient Athens make direct democracy possible?
- Why did council members rotate? What evils did this prevent? How did rotation of Council members and of officers guard against incumbency and the usurpation of power by individuals or groups? What problems did it create?
- How does election by allotment (lot) differ from election by vote? What present-day activity is similar to this allotment process?
- What jobs did the Assembly and the Council perform? How did this represent the legislative and executive functions of a government?

### Vocabulary:

- allotment
- Assembly
- Council of 500
- decree
- direct democracy
- disenfranchised
- representative democracy
- sortition
- ostracism

### Evaluation:

Student discussion

Analysis of the document by Themistocles

- How did the decree by Themistocles mirror the democratic organization of society and its emphasis on being fair?

- Collect and evaluate student's "Decison Point"
- Evaluate written responses to wiki questions.